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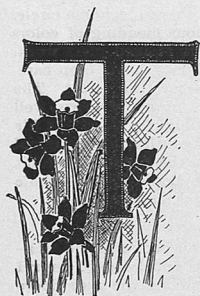
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

HARMONY IN TONE.

By E. H. SLICKER.



THE interior of every house betrays a tone to which we respond, as every building is said to respond when the tone to which it is built is struck. This tone may be grave or gay; major or minor, and it is given by the salient point of color, just as in a picture all values are determined upon a scale determined by the artist. This is a matter which money does not settle. In fact the more money expended the more glaring the fault, if good taste does not guide the expenditure. There is the temptation to make many salient points, to multiply elegant and striking objects, and consequently confuse the eye, and destroy all sense of

proportion.

Many people with more money than taste put the furnishing and decorating of their homes into the hands of a professional. They forget, or do not know, that there must be a fitness between the occupant of a room and the room itself. An inharmonious toilet is as much of a blot in an exquisitely appointed drawing-room as a crude color in a mat or table cover. This does not mean that a lady should always be elegantly dressed, it means simply that a home should be an emanation of individuality, and should correspond to the thought of the occupant. For this reason it is never advisable to furnish a room at once, in a hurry. Let the room grow easily and naturally, let one piece of furniture attract another by the law of affinity, and never fear to depart from the conventional.

Spontaneity, the unexpected, is attractive in character. Is it a virtue to be exactly like your neighbor, either in manner, or in the decoration of your home?

The greatest temptation is to outdo. Too many vases, too many chairs, easels, and tables! Every Christmas and birthday numerous knick-knacks are deposited in our homes, with the best intention in the world, by friends who do a little painting or embroidery; what are we to do with them? Shall we make our rooms look like a shop or bazar?

It is said that the Centennial Exposition created an aesthetic taste in America. It is a fatal thing to have a taste for art forced to a quick development. "Art is long." If, with the love of Japanese art, there could have been born the Japanese simplicity and restraint in decoration the harm might not have been so obvious as it now is. The passion for ceramics has penetrated every village and almost every farm house very often with an uplifting influence. While waiting in a "parlor" recently we counted thirty-four vases; fifteen were on the mantle, and through a door yet more vases were to be seen; all sizes, all kinds, and all handsome and expensive. Pictures were piled one on another, on the walls, and among them all there was not one real work of art. The Japanese hangs one exquisite picture in the place of honor on his wall, before it stands a vase with a bunch of cherry blossoms, or chrysanthemums. When the picture has hung a certain length of time it is taken down and another put in its place. Is not this a hint for us? We do not need, however, to limit ourselves to one picture or one vase. Why not have a retiring room for superfluous bric-a-brac? Or, we might do as Howells tells us the home-hunters in the "Hazard of New Fortunes" did—pack it away in barrels, and make an entire change of ornaments once a month, or once a quarter, when we pay our rent. It would rest the eye and give us more room in which to move about.

The secret of enlarging a small room is to have but little in it. Push the chairs back against the walls, open a vista, hang a picture at the further end with a good perspective of distant blue. Cut off some superfluous luxury, and provide a bunch of flowers fresh cut every day or two, or a graceful fern. Do not, however, stand it on one end of a dangling yard or two of flowered silk, with the risk of having your beautiful flowers pulled to the floor. Some of our rooms look as if they had been through the wars and every piece of furniture had come back maimed or

crippled for life. The chairs are tied up, the end of the mantel is plastered, the pictures have despondent tags and ends depending from them; even the clock is swathed.

We have been asked how people without taste or originality can furnish a room. Study nature. Observe the soft grays, tender greens, and the sparing bits of red on a moss covered stone in the meadow, or the wonderful tints in a lichen-covered rail fence. See the rich gradations of browns in autumn, how all tones harmonize! Cultivate the eye until a crudity in color shall be as painful as a coarse word.

Remember that simplicity and cleanliness are always beautiful. If carpets are used instead of rugs, have them made like rugs. If they are properly made and pressed they will lie flat. If a bare floor seems comfortless have the carpet come nearly to the margin of the room, but leave the corners so that they may be wiped up instead of being swept. Do not cover the windows with layer upon layer of curtains. Light means cheerful spirits and good health, and without these two essentials beauty is impossible.

THERE is a very pretty arrangement for rare curios. It is a small cabinet made entirely of glass, the framework being of the slightest construction possible consistent with security. Within the dainty little receptacle clearly visible through the clear plate glass, are antique gems, ancient watches and other rare and precious articles, which it would be unsafe to leave unprotected on the table, but which, in this way, can be seen and admired by every one.

WITH the craze for antique furniture, candlesticks have come into vogue, and they are distributed everywhere in the rooms. They are not used for illumination, but simply for decoration, and the pleasing effect obtained from the light that they give. A novel candlestick is a huge basket of wax flowers. There are roses, lilies, orchids, violets, and chrysanthemums grouped together with ferns and green leaves, but each flower was really a small candle, designed to burn at least half an hour. When the bunch of flowers are lighted the effect is magical.

THE most beautiful Venetian glass is imported now in Oriental and mediæval designs, brilliant and fantastic, glittering with every color—amber, ruby, emerald, orange, blue, opal, plain, polished, frosted. This delicate crystal is twisted into the most grotesque forms, or moulded in lines of exquisite beauty—tall goblets, quaint flagons, lovely flower-like vases—every variety of form and design—dyed with a thousand gorgeous tints, and often richly overlaid with gold and silver. Besides these merely ornamental pieces, whose quaint beauty excites wonder and admiration, there are sets of this crystal for table use—delicate tumblers, wine glasses, fruit dishes mounted upon low silver stands with silver chains about them; water bottles and decanters of various shapes, sizes and decorations.

As in every other department of art, modern skill has introduced improvements in Mosaic work. By the old method the Mosaic glass was made—and is made now in Venice—by taking a big drop of molten glass and pressing it out flat to about a quarter of an inch in thickness. They are made in every color, and after pressing are cut into little cubes and arranged to form the design, and it is the cut face that forms the picture surface. The disadvantages are the disagreeable glitter of the glass and the difficulty of shaping the pieces.

In the new method the workman has a shallow mold, into which he sifts from the perforated bottom of a tin jug a colored powder. From another jug he sifts another thickness of white powder, and then a considerable thickness of coarser powder, making altogether a quarter of an inch.

These powders are of ground glass, and are fused by the heat of the fire into a solid tile. The first powder is of the color the glass is intended to be, the second is white, to give quality to the surface color and to resist damp, and the third is simply a backing of coarser glass to give strength and thickness. The tile is then cut up into little pieces with a steel wheel into the shapes required.